Please add new claims 96-99.


1-7.    (Canceled)


8.      (Previously Presented)  A method for maintaining a messaging network having a master platform and at least one messaging platform, the master platform having a master global routing table and the at least one messaging platform having a global routing table, the master global routing table and the at least one messaging platform global routing table holding a messaging platform entry for a plurality of messaging platforms on the messaging network, the method comprising the steps of:

responding to each of the plurality of messaging platforms on the messaging network that sends a response message to the master platform, said response message sent by each of the plurality of messaging platforms at a selected interval which is defined in the messaging platform entry corresponding to each of the plurality of messaging platforms;

sending a query message to a selected one of the plurality of messaging platforms on the messaging network that fails to send a response message to the master platform within said selected interval;

updating a messaging platform entry of said selected messaging platform in the master global routing table and the global routing table of the at least one messaging platform on the messaging network, if said selected messaging platform fails to respond to said query message, said step of updating setting an operational status within said messaging platform entry to indicate a disabled status; and

using said operational status of a remote messaging platform to determine whether the at least one messaging platform may send a user message using the messaging network to said remote messaging platform for delivery to an area of operation supported by said remote messaging platform.


9.      (Previously Presented)  The method of claim 8, further including the steps of:

providing a token pool of said messaging platform entry for each of said plurality of messaging platforms with an initial amount of tokens;

debiting a debit amount from the token pool of a messaging platform that requests delivery of a user message at an area of operation supported by a remote messaging platform; and

incrementing a credit amount to the token pool of said remote messaging platform in response to the delivery of said user message within said area of operation by said remote messaging platform.

10.    (Original)  The method of claim 9, further including a step of updating a messaging platform entry of a messaging platform to have a disabled operation status in response to said messaging platform having a token pool amount that falls below a selected threshold.

11-38. (Canceled)

39.    (Previously Presented)  A system for maintaining a messaging network having at least one messaging platform, the system comprising:

a master platform having a master global routing table configurable to store a messaging platform entry for each messaging platform on the messaging network;

a global routing table for at least one messaging platform, wherein said global routing table holds a messaging platform entry for each messaging platform on the messaging network;

wherein said master platform is configured to respond to each messaging platform on the messaging network that sends a response message to said master platform, said response message sent by each messaging platform at a selected interval which is defined in the messaging platform entry corresponding to each messaging platform;

wherein said master platform is further configured to send a query message to a selected messaging platform on the messaging network that fails to send a response message to the master platform within said selected interval;

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wherein said master platform is further configured to update an operational status of said selected messaging platform entry to a disabled status, said messaging platform entry corresponding to said selected messaging platform in said master global routing table and said global routing table of said at least one messaging platform on the messaging network, if said selected messaging platform fails to respond to said query message; and

wherein a sending messaging platform on the network is configured to check said operational status of a remote messaging platform to determine whether said sending messaging platform may send a user message using the messaging network to said remote messaging platform for delivery to an area of operation supported by said remote messaging platform.

40.    (Previously Presented)  The system of claim 39, wherein said messaging platform entry comprises a token pool for each messaging platform, said token pool of each messaging platform having an initial amount of tokens; said master platform being configurable to debit a debit amount from a token pool of an originating messaging platform that requests delivery of a user message at an area of operation supported by a remote messaging platform; and said master platform increments a credit amount to a token pool of said remote messaging platform in response to the delivery of said user message within said area of operation by said remote messaging platform.

41.    (Original)  The system of claim 40, wherein said master platform updates a messaging platform profile of a messaging platform to have a disabled operation status in response to said messaging platform having a token pool amount that falls below a selected threshold.

42-61. (Canceled)

62.    (Previously Presented)  A system for maintaining a messaging network having a plurality of messaging devices, comprising:

a master device having a master global routing data structure with a messaging device data entry for at least one of the plurality of messaging devices on the messaging network, each messaging device data entry including an operational status;

wherein the master device is capable of responding to each messaging device on the messaging network that sends a first message type within a predetermined interval;

wherein the master device is capable of sending a second message type to the at least one of the plurality of messaging devices on the messaging network that fails to send the first message type to the master device within the predetermined interval; and

wherein the master device is further capable of altering the operational status of the messaging device entry of the at least one messaging device to a disabled status if the at least one messaging device fails to respond to the second message type.

63.    (Previously Presented)  The system of claim 62 wherein the predetermined interval is defined in the messaging device data entry for the at least one of the plurality of messaging devices.

64.    (Previously Presented)  The system of claim 62 wherein a first messaging device on the network is configured to check the operational status of the at least one of the plurality of messaging devices to determine whether the first messaging device may send a user message using the messaging network to the at least one of the plurality of messaging devices.

65.    (Previously Presented)  The system of claim 62, further comprising an operational area data entry for the at least one of the plurality of messaging devices in the master global routing data structure.

66.    (Previously Presented)  The system of claim 65 wherein a first messaging device on the network is configured to check the operational area of the at least one of the plurality of messaging devices to determine whether the first messaging

device may send a user message using the messaging network to the at least one of the plurality of messaging devices for to delivery to an area of operation supported by the at least one of the plurality of messaging devices.

67.     (Previously Presented)  The system of claim 62, further comprising a global routing data structure associated with each of the plurality of messaging devices, the global routing data structure having a messaging device data entry for each of the plurality of messaging devices on the messaging network, each messaging device data entry comprising a host ID, and an operational status.

68.     (Previously Presented)  The system of claim 67 wherein the master device is further configured to update the operational status of messaging device data entries of the global routing data structure associated with each of the plurality of messaging devices.

69.     (Previously Presented)  The system of claim 68 wherein the master device alters the operational status of a messaging device data entry for a predetermined one of the plurality of messaging devices in the global routing data structure associated with each of the plurality of messaging devices to a disabled status if the predetermined messaging device fails to respond to the second message type.

70.     (Previously Presented)  The system of claim 62 wherein each of the plurality of messaging devices has an initial amount of tokens in a token pool associated with the respective messaging device, the master device being further configured to debit a debit amount of tokens from the token pool of a first messaging device that requests delivery of a user message at an area of operation supported by a second messaging device and to add a credit amount of tokens to the token pool of the second messaging device in response to the delivery of the user message within the area of operation by the second messaging device.

71.     (Previously Presented)  The system of claim 70 wherein the master device updates a messaging device profile of a predetermined one of the plurality of

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messaging devices to have a disabled operation status in response to the predetermined messaging device having a token pool amount that falls below a predetermined threshold.

72. (Previously Presented) A method for providing information to a subscriber having a mailbox and a corresponding mailbox ID on a messaging system, the method comprising the steps of:

providing service information to a messaging platform;

sending a request for information to a master platform in response to the service information, the master platform responding to the request by requesting information from an information source, the information corresponding to the service information;

receiving the requested information from the information source;

converting the received information a delivery format specified in the service information; and

providing the requested information to the subscriber in the specified delivery format.

73. (Previously Presented) The method in claim 72 wherein the delivery format includes a fax delivery format.

74. (Previously Presented) The method in claim 72 wherein the delivery format includes a voice delivery format.

75. (Previously Presented) The method in claim 72 wherein the delivery format includes an email format.

76. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 72 wherein the master platform forwards the received information to the messaging platform only when the messaging platform has an in-operation status.

77.     (Previously Presented) The method of claim 76 wherein the in-operation status is at least partly based on an operation schedule defined for the messaging platform.

78.     (Previously Presented) A method for providing information to a subscriber on a messaging system, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a mailbox ID and service information from a subscriber;

requesting information from an information source based on the received service information;

receiving the requested information from the information source;

converting the received information to a delivery format specified in the received service information if the requested information from the information source is received in a format other then the specified delivery format; and

delivering the requested information to a computing device of the subscriber in the specified delivery format.

79.     (Previously Presented) The method in claim 78 wherein the delivery format includes a fax delivery format.

80.     (Previously Presented) The method in claim 78 wherein the delivery format includes a voice delivery format.

81.     (Previously Presented) The method in claim 78 wherein the delivery format includes an email format.

82.     (Previously Presented) The method of claim 78 wherein the received information is forwarded to a messaging platform to which the subscriber computing device is coupled only when the messaging platform has an in-operation status.

83    (Previously Presented) The method of claim 82 wherein the in-operation status is at least partly based on an operation schedule defined for the messaging platform.

84.    (Previously Presented) A system for delivering information to a subscriber computing device on a messaging system, the system comprising:

a messaging computer having a communication module configured to receive a mailbox ID and service information from the subscriber computing device and to request information corresponding to the service information;

the communication module being further configured to communicate with an information source in response to the request for information and to transmit the request for information thereto;

wherein the messaging computer is further configured to respond to any information received from the information source by converting the received information to have a delivery format corresponding to a delivery format specified in the service information; and

wherein the messaging computer communication module is further configured to provide the received information in the specified delivery format to the subscriber computing device when the subscriber accesses a mailbox corresponding to the mailbox ID.

85.    (Previously Presented) The system in claim 84 wherein the service information includes an information type and a delivery period.

86.    (Previously Presented) The system in claim 84 wherein the delivery format includes a voice delivery format.

87.    (Previously Presented) The system in claim 84 wherein the delivery format includes an email format.

88.    (Previously Presented) The system in claim 84 wherein the delivery format includes a fax format.

89.    (Previously Presented) The system of claim 84 wherein the messaging computer communication module forwards the received information to the subscriber computing device only when the subscriber computing device has an in-operation status.

90.    (Previously Presented) The system of claim 89 wherein the in-operation status is based on an operation schedule defined for the subscriber computing device.

91.    (Previously Presented) The system of claim 84 wherein the messaging computer is configured to delay sending the received information to the subscriber computing device when the subscriber computing device has a non-operational status.

92.    (Previously Presented) A messaging platform for delivering information to a subscriber on a messaging system, the system comprising:

means for receiving a mailbox ID and service information from a subscriber;

means for requesting from a master platform information corresponding to the service information,

means for receiving the requested information from the master messaging platform in response to the master platform sending a request for information from an information source and receiving the requested information therefrom;

means for converting the information received from the master messaging platform to have a delivery format corresponding to a delivery format selected by the subscriber; and

means for providing the information in the subscriber-selected delivery format to the subscriber when in response to subscriber access of a mailbox corresponding to the mailbox ID.

93. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 92 wherein the information in the information source response message delivered to the subscriber is multimedia information.

94. (Previously Presented) The system in claim 92 wherein said service information includes an information type and a delivery period.

95. (Previously Presented) The system in claim 94 wherein the delivery format comprises a selected one of a voice delivery format, an email format, and a facsimile format.

96. (New) A method for maintaining a messaging network having a master platform and a plurality of messaging platforms coupled to the master messaging platform, the method comprising:

waiting for each of the plurality of messaging platforms to send a first message type to the master platform within a first predetermined time interval associated with each of the respective plurality of messaging platforms;

sending an acknowledgement message to each of the plurality of messaging platforms from which the first message type was received within the respective first predetermined time intervals;

indicating an enabled operational status for each of the plurality of messaging platforms from which the first message type was received within the respective first predetermined time intervals;

if the first message type is not received from one of the plurality of messaging platforms within the respective first predetermined time interval, sending a second message type to the one of the plurality of messaging platforms;

waiting for the one of the plurality of messaging platforms to respond to the second message type within a second predetermined time interval; and

if a response to the second message type is not received from the one of the plurality of messaging platforms within the second predetermined time interval, indicating a disabled operational status for the one of the plurality of messaging platforms.

97.     (New) The method of claim 96, further comprising using the operational status to control delivery of messages to each of the plurality of messaging platforms wherein messages may be delivered to any of the messaging platforms whose operational status is enabled and messages may not be delivered to any of the messaging platforms whose operational status is disabled.

98.     (New) The method of claim 96, further comprising continuing to send the second message type to the one of the plurality of messaging platforms whose operational status is disabled.

99.     (New) The method of claim 98, further comprising altering the operational status to enabled for the one of the plurality of messaging platforms whose operational status is disabled if the one of the plurality of messaging platforms responds to the second message type.